DiFrancesco, Bateman, Coley, Yospin, Kunzman, Davis, Lehrer & Flaum, P.C. 15 Mountain Boulevard Warren, New Jersey 07059 (908) 757-7800 Attorneys for Defendants, Affiliated Physicians and Employers Health Plan

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

UNION SURGERY CENTER, LLC ON ASSIGNMENT OF PETER G.,

Document Electronically Filed

Plaintiff,

Civil Action No.

-VS-

QUALCARE, AFFILIATED PHYSICIANS AND EMPLOYERS HEALTH PLAN, ABC BENEFIT PLANS 1-10; AND JOHN/JANE DOES INC./LLC 1-10, **NOTICE OF REMOVAL**

Defendants.

Defendant Affiliated Physicians and Employers Health Plan by and through its attorneys, DiFrancesco, Bateman, Coley, Yospin, Kunzman, Davis, Lehrer & Flaum, P.C. files the following Notice of Removal of the above captioned action from the Superior Court of New Jersey, Law Division, Union County, where it is now pending, to the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, and in support states:

1. This Court has original jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1331 and 28 U.S.C. §1441 on the grounds that Plaintiff's Complaint has set forth allegations of its federal statutory rights, falling within the ambit of the Federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act ("ERISA"), 29 U.S.C. § 1002, et. seq.

- 2. On or about April 7, 2014 Plaintiff initiated this action against Defendant Affiliated Physicians and Employers, in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Law Division Union County, Docket No. UNN-L-361-13. A true and accurate copy of the Complaint, which constitute all process, pleadings and orders served in the state court action applicable to this Defendant, are attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.
- This matter was previously filed in Superior Court against Defendant QualCare. The Complaint against Defendant QualCare was dismissed on summary judgment, and the Complaint was recently amended to include Defendant Affiliated Physicians and Employer Health Plan. This is a civil action in which Plaintiff seeks damages for losses claimed as a result of alleged violations of its rights under the federal statute, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act ("ERISA"), 29 U.S.C. § 1002, et. seq. All three Counts of Plaintiff's Complaint allege violations by Defendant of the provisions of the federal statute, ERISA 29 U.S.C. § 1002, et. seq.
- 4. Removal of a state court action without regard to the citizenship of the parties is appropriate if the suit could have been brought in federal district court, as "founded on a claim or right arising under the Constitution, treaties or laws of the United States." 28 U.S.C. §1441(b). The Court has original jurisdiction over this matter as all three Counts of the Complaint arise from the Constitution, treaties or laws of the United States.
- 5. Plaintiff served Defendants with a copy of the Complaint on June 3, 2014, which was also the first date upon which Defendant had notice of the pending action. No further substantive proceedings have taken place since service on Defendants.

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6. This Notice of Removal is being filed with the Court within 30 days of the date

Defendants first received notice, through Plaintiff's Complaint, that the action was removable.

As such, the Notice of Removal is timely filed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1446.

7. The United States District Court for the District of New Jersey is the district

embracing the location where the state court action is pending.

8. The Notice of Removal has been sent, this same date, to the Superior Court of

New Jersey, Union County, and a copy of this Notice of Removal will be served upon counsel

for Plaintiff pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1446(d).

WHEREFORE, Defendants Affiliated Physicians and Employers Health Plan respectfully

request that this matter now pending in the Superior Court of the State of New Jersey, Union

County, Law Division be removed to the United States District Court for the District of New

Jersey.

Respectfully submitted,

DiFrancesco, Bateman, Coley, Yospin,

Kunzman, Davis, Lehrer & Flaum, P.C.

By: s/Lisa M. Fittipaldi

Lisa M. Fittipaldi

Dated: June 11, 2014

EXHIBIT A



Mack-Cali Centre II
650 From Rd – Suite 565
Paramus, New Jersey 07652
Email: info@callagylaw.com
Web: callagylaw.com
Office: 201.261.1700
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Michael J. Smikun+*
Jennifer Chapla+*^
Matthew R. Major+
Rebecca Molnar+
Andrew P. Slowinski+
James Greenspan+*
Lauren E. Fradella+*
Jorge J. Feliz+
Thelma Akpan+=
Tamara E. Kotsev+
Eric Meehan+*
Lynne Goldman+*

+Member of the New Jersey Bar *Member of the New York Bar ^Member of the Connecticut Bar =Member of the Pennsylvania Bar

New York Office: 1133 Broadway Suite 708 New York, NY 10010 (Reply to NJ Office) May 30, 2014

Via Regular Mail

Lisa M. Fittipaldi, Esq.
DiFrancesco, Bateman, Coley, Yospin, Kunzman, Davis, & Lehrer, P.C.
15 Mountain Boulevard
Warren, NJ 07059

RE: Union Surgery Center o/a/o/ Peter G., vs. Qualcare, et. als. Docket No.: UNN-L-361-13`

Dear Sir/Madam:

This firm, and more specifically the undersigned, represents Plaintiff in the above-captioned matter.

Enclosed please find a copy of an Amended Complaint. Also, enclosed please find an Acknowledgment of Service. Should you choose to accept service, please sign and return the enclosed Acknowledgement of Service via the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope within thirty (30) days of this date.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Lauren E. Fradella, Esq.

LEF/nlh
Enclosures.

LAW OFFICES OF SEAN R. CALL	AGY, ESQ.
Lauren Fradella, Esq.	
Mack-Cali Center II	
650 From Road – Suite 565	
Paramus, NJ 07652	
Tel.:(201) 261-1700	
Attorneys for Plaintiff, Union Surgery (Center, LLC
UNION SURGERY CENTER, LLC	on
assignment of PETER G.,	
-	

Plaintiff,

VS.

QUALCARE, AFFILIATED PHYSICIANS AND EMPLOYERS HEALTH PLAN and ABC CORP., being a fictitious name for the Plan Sponsor whose identity is presently unknown,

Defendant.

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY LAW DIVISION: UNION COUNTY DOCKET NO.: L-361-13

Civil Action

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby acknowledges service of a copy of a Summons, Complaint, Civil Case Information Statement and Track Assignment Notice on this ___30___ day of 3 May June, 2014.

> AFFILIATED PHYSICIANS AND EMPLOYERS **HEALTH PLAN**

Title: Attorneys for Defendant DiFrancesco Bateman

CALLAGY LAW

650 From Road, Suite 565 Paramus, NJ 07652 (201) 261-1700 Attorneys for Plaintiff Union Surgery Center, LLC

RECEIVED / FILED Superior Court of Nev Jersey

CIVIL CASE MANAGEMENT UNION COUNTY

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY

Union Surgery Center, LLC on assignment: of Peter G.,

Plaintiff,

LAW DIVISION: UNION COUNTY

DOCKET NO.: UNN-L-361-13

CIVIL ACTION

V.

Qualcare, Affiliated Physicians and Employers Health Plan, ABC Benefit Plans 1-10; and John/Jane Does Inc./LLC 1-10.

AMENDED COMPLAINT

COMPUTER

APR - 8 2014

SECTION

Defendants.

Plaintiff Union Surgery Center, LLC on assignment of Peter G., by way of Complaint against Defendants:

THE PARTIES

- 1. At all relevant times, Plaintiff Union Surgery Center, LLC ("Plaintiff") was a healthcare provider in the County of Union, State of New Jersey.
 - Upon information and belief, Defendant Qualcare ("Defendant" and collectively with ABC Benefit Plans 1-10, and/or John/Jane Does Inc./LLC1-10, "Defendants") is primarily engaged in the business of providing and/or administering health care plans ("Plans") or policies ("Policies") and was present and engaged in significant activities in the State of New Jersey to sustain this Court's exercise of in personam jurisdiction.
- 2. Upon information and belief, Defendant Affiliated Physicians and Employers Health Plan ("Defendant" and collectively with ABC Benefit Plans 1-10, and/or John/Jane

USCT-OLC-MM-001

Does Inc./LLC1-10, "Defendants") is primarily engaged in the business of providing and/or administering health care plans ("Plans") or policies ("Policies") and was present and engaged in significant activities in the State of New Jersey to sustain this Court's exercise of *in personam* jurisdiction.

- 3. Upon information and belief, Defendant ABC Benefit Plans 1-10 ("Defendant" and collectively with all Defendants, "Defendants") are benefit health plans that provide or administer health care benefits to its members or beneficiaries within the State of New Jersey and was present and engaged in significant activities in the State of New Jersey to sustain this Court's exercise of *in personam* jurisdiction.
- 4. Upon information and belief, Defendant John/Jane Does Inc./LLC 1-10 ("Defendant" and collectively with all Defendants, "Defendants") are employers or funds that provide or administer health care benefits to its members within the State of New Jersey and was present and engaged in significant activities in the State of New Jersey to sustain this Court's exercise of *in personam* jurisdiction.
- 5. ABC Benefit Plans 1-10 and John/Jane Does Inc./LLC 1-10 have been added as Defendants in this matter because their identity is not known at this time, and Plaintiffs are including them in this action through fictitious names. On information and belief, the unidentified Defendants are involved and/or responsible, and/or represent others who are involved and/or responsible, for the payment of services rendered by Plaintiff in this action.

ANATOMY OF THE CLAIM

6. This dispute arises from Defendants' refusal to reimburse Plaintiff the remaining

- balance for services provided to Defendants' beneficiary or insured, Peter G. Patient ID No. H1199311.
- On or about 2011-12-09, Plaintiff provided medically reasonable and necessary services to Peter G., a beneficiary or insured of the Defendants.
- 8. Plaintiff obtained an assignment of benefits from Peter G.. See Exhibit A attached hereto.
- Plaintiff prepared a Health Insurance Claim Form formally demanding reimbursement in the amount of \$15,600.00 for the medically necessary services rendered to Peter G..
 See Exhibit B attached hereto.
- 10. Subsequently, Plaintiff received payment in the amount of \$419.71 for the medically reasonable and necessary services provided to Peter G. (Claim No. 0024538953). See Exhibit C attached hereto.
- 11. Taking into account deductions, copayments and coinsurance, this resulted in an underpayment of \$15,180.29.
- 12. Accordingly, Plaintiff brings this action for recovery of the outstanding balance.

COUNT ONE

FAILURE TO MAKE ALL PAYMENTS PURSUANT TO MEMBER'S PLAN

- 13. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges the allegations of Paragraphs 1-18 of this Complaint and incorporates same by reference hereto.
- 14. Plaintiff avers this Count to the extent the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, codified in 29 USCS §1002, et seq. ("ERISA") governs this dispute.
- 15. Section 502(a)(1), codified at 29 U.S.C. 1132(a) provides a cause of action for a beneficiary or participant seeking payment under a Plan.

- 16. Plaintiff has standing to seek such relief based on the assignment of benefits obtained by Plaintiff from Peter G..
- 17. Upon information and belief, Defendants acted in a fiduciary capacity in administering any claims determined to be governed by ERISA.
- 18. Plaintiff is entitled to recover benefits due to Peter G. under any applicable ERISA Plan and Policy.
- 19. Upon information and belief, Defendants have failed to make payment pursuant to the controlling Plan or Policy.
- 20. As a result, Plaintiff has been damaged and continues to suffer damages in the operation of its medical practice.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendants as follows:

- a. For an Order directing Defendants to pay to Plaintiff \$15,180.29;
- For an Order directing Defendants to pay to Plaintiff all benefits Peter G.
 would be entitled to pursuant the Plan or Policy issued by Defendants;
- c. For compensatory damages and interest;
- d. For attorneys fees and costs of suit;
- e. For such other and further relief as the court may deem just and equitable.

COUNT TWO

FAILURE TO PROVIDE ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION

- 21. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges the allegations of Paragraphs 1-26 of this Complaint and incorporates same by reference hereto.
- 22. Plaintiff avers this Count to the extent the Employee Retirement Income Security Act,

- codified in 29 USCS §1002, et seq. ("ERISA") governs this dispute.
- 23. Section 502(a)(1), codified at 29 U.S.C. 1132(a) provides a cause of action for a beneficiary or participant seeking damages for an administrator's refusal to supply requested information.
- 24. Plaintiff has standing to seek such relief based on the assignment of benefits obtained by Plaintiff from Peter G..
- 25. Plaintiff has requested copies of the member Plan or Policy for Peter G..
- 26. Plaintiff has also requested documents supporting Defendants' calculation of reimbursement in this case.
- 27. To date, Plaintiff has not received copies of the requested documents
- 28. 29 U.S.C. 1132(a)(1)(a) and 1132 (c)(1)(B) impose a statutory penalty on any administrator who fails to comply with a request for information required to be turned over to a beneficiary under ERISA.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendants as follows:

- a. For an Order directing Defendants to pay to Plaintiff \$110.00 per day for each day that Defendants failed to provide Plaintiff with a copy of the member Plan or Policy;
- b. For compensatory damages and interest;
- c. For attorneys fees and costs of suit;
- d. For such other and further relief as the court may deem just and equitable.

COUNT THREE

FAILURE TO ESTABLISH/MAINTAIN REASONABLE CLAIMS PROCEDURES

- 29. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges the allegations of Paragraphs 1-34 of this Complaint and incorporates same by reference hereto.
- 30. Plaintiff avers this Count to the extent the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, codified in 29 USCS §1002, et seq. ("ERISA") governs this dispute.
- 31. 29 C.F.R. 2560.503-1 requires every employee benefit plan establish and maintain reasonable procedures governing the filing of benefit claims, notification of benefit determinations, and appeal of adverse benefit determinations.
- 32. In particular, 29 C.F.R. 2560.503-1 requires that if a claim for benefits is denied in whole or in part, the administrator of every employee benefit plan shall provide written notice of the determination within 90 days after receipt of the claim by the plan.
- 33. 29 C.F.R. 2560.503-1 further provides that in the event that a claim for benefits is denied, the written notice of the benefit determination must communicate, *inter alia*, in a manner calculated to be understood by the person claiming benefits: (1) A description of the plan's review procedures and the time limits applicable to such procedures, including a statement of the claimant's right to bring a civil action under section 502(a) of the Act following an adverse benefit determination on review.
- 34. 29 C.F.R. 2560.503-1 further provides that every employee benefit plan shall establish and maintain a procedure by which a claimant shall have a reasonable opportunity to appeal an adverse benefit determination to an appropriate named fiduciary of the plan, and under which there will be a full and fair review of the claim and the adverse benefit determination.

- 35. In the case at bar, the employee benefit plan from which Plaintiff claimed benefits did not establish and maintain, in its actual operation of the Plan, procedures that ensured that all relevant time limits and appeal procedures were communicated to the person claiming benefits.
- 36. As a consequence of Defendants' failure to provide, in a manner calculated to be understood by the person claiming benefits, written notice of all relevant time limits and appeals procedures of the Plan in connection with its adverse benefit determination rendered to Plaintiff, the Plan has failed to comply with the Claims Procedures requirements of 29 C.F.R. 2560.503-1.
- 37. 29 C.F.R. 2560.503-1 further provides that in the event an employee benefit plan fails to establish or follow claims procedures that comply with that regulation, the person claiming benefits shall be deemed to have exhausted the administrative remedies available under the plan and shall be entitled to pursue any available remedies under section 502(a) of ERISA on the basis that the plan has failed to provide a reasonable claims procedure that would yield a decision on the merits of the claim.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant as follows:

- a. For an Order that Defendant has not established and maintained claims procedures that comply with 29 C.F.R. 2560.503-1, and that as a result Plaintiff is deemed to have exhausted all required administrative remedies;
- b. For compensatory damages and interest;
- c. For attorneys fees and costs of suit;
- d. For such other and further relief as the court may deem just and

equitable.

NOTICE TO PRODUCE

Pursuant to R. 4:18-1, Plaintiff hereby demands that each Defendant produce the following documentation within fifty (50) days as prescribed by the Rules of Court. Additionally please be advised that the following requests are ongoing and continuing in nature and each Defendant is therefore required to continuously update its responses thereto as new information or documentation comes into existence.

- 1. A true and exact copy of any and all Health Insurance Policy, Summary Plan Description, and/or Plan describing the terms and conditions governing the patients who received services rendered by Plaintiff as described in the Complaint filed in this action.
- 2. Copies of representative documents (with private information redacted to comply with privacy laws) showing payments made by any Defendant entities to the same or similar healthcare provider as Plaintiff.
- Copies! of representative documents (with private information redacted to comply with privacy laws) showing payments made by the Plan to this healthcare provider and similar healthcare providers for comparable services as an in network service.
- 4. Copies of representative documents (with private information redacted to comply with privacy laws) showing payments made by the Plan to this healthcare provider and similar healthcare providers for comparable services as an out of network service.
- 5. The name, address and contact information of any other party of interest, specifically the Plan Administrator, Claims Administrator, Third-Party

- Administrator and /or additional Insurance Companies.
- The name of the publication, database, documentation, Medicare guidelines etc., of all documents and databases used by Defendant in computing the Usual and Customary Rates.
- 7. Provide copies of any and all algorithm(s), formula(s), procedure(s) or fee schedule(s) used to derive the customary and reasonable reimbursement rate in this matter.
- 8. Copies of any and all documentation, including but not limited to manuals, statutes, rules, regulations, books and/or industry standards which refer to, reflect or otherwise relate to the date of service in question or any potential defense to the action in question.
- 9. If any Defendant intends to produce the testimony of any expert witnesses at Trial, set forth the names and addresses of each such witness, their area of expertise, the subject matter on which they are expected to testify, and a summary of the grounds of each opinion. Attach a true copy of all written reports provided the Defendant by such witnesses.

TRIAL COUNSEL DESIGNATION

Lauren E. Fradella, Esq., is hereby designated as Trial Counsel in the above matter.

DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

Pursuant to Rule 4:35-1(a) and (b), Plaintiff respectfully demands a trial by jury on all issues in the within action so triable.

R. 4:5-1(b)(2) CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to R. 4:5-1(b)(2), I hereby certify that the matter in controversy is not the subject of any other action pending in any court, is not the subject of a pending arbitration proceeding and is not the subject of any other contemplated action or arbitration proceeding, except as may be set forth below:

None.

I further certify that I know of no non-parties who should be joined in the action pursuant to R. 4:28, or who may be subject to joinder pursuant to R. 4:29-1(b) because of potential liability to any party on the basis of the same transactional facts, except as may be set forth below:

None.

CERTIFICATION OF ATTORNEY

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge, information and belief, the within matter is not the subject of any other action or proceeding. I certify that the foregoing statements made by me are true. I am aware that if any of the foregoing statements made by me are willfully false, I am subject to punishment.

CALLAGY LAW Attorneys for Plaintiff

Lauren E. Fradella, Esq.

DATED: April 3, 2014

EXHIBIT A

	RE C	EDACTED
CON	APPEALS AND INDEPENDENT ARBITRATION OF CLAIMS	um
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As Stage 3, the light of the li	plicate provider will share your personal and medical information with DOBI, the IURO, and the plessionals. Everyone is required by law to keep your information confidential. DOBI must report this personal information is ever included in these reports.	ilm IURO's dica about
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	INDEPENDENT ARBITRATION OF CLAMMS	
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USCT-PG-Page 1

EXHIBIT B

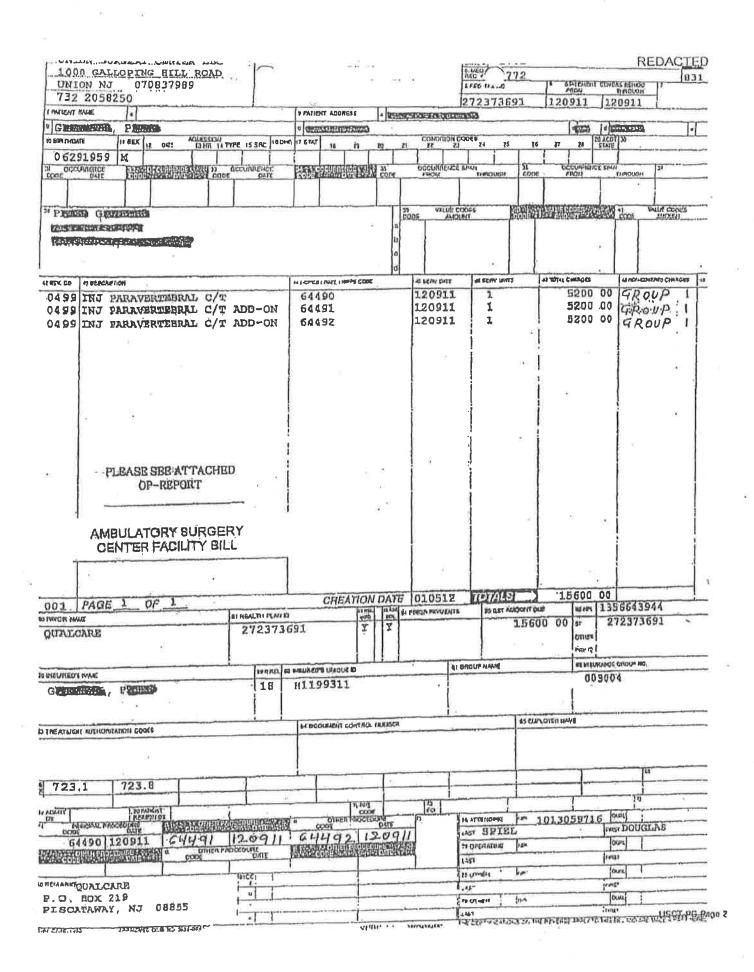


EXHIBIT C

REDACTED

QualCare, Inc. P. O. Box 219 Piscataway, NJ 08855-0219

to11d1190117

QUALCARE

Riectronic Service Requested

3-BIGIT 070

1-888-670-8135 WWW.QUALCAREINO.COM/QCMEWA

Affiliated Physicians and Employers
Health Plan

Group No: 01APHP30217D Date: 02/20/2012

Payment Voucher

Page 1 of 1

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REQUEST FOR REVIEW: All claims have been processed in accordance with the plan provisions and limitations. Should you or an authorized representative like to request a review of the handling of this claim, you must submit a written request within 180 days to the address licted above. Please include with your request any additional information or documentation you feel would be pertinent to the review of this claim. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our Customer Service Department at the telephone number listed above.

Electronic (EDI) claims submission results in faster daims processing. QualCare NEIC Payer ID is 23342, Avoid processing delays by ensuring that the patient information submitted matches exactly what is on the patient's ID card, including member ID, birth date, and pender.

Reminder- EDI claims aubmitted without your NPI; or with any other legacy provider ID# will be rejected. As always, your TIN is a required data item.

